

I. Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces without prejudice all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 9, wherein the end of said intermediate preheating step, the compacted sheet reaches a temperature lower than the temperature at which catalysis of the binder starts and preferably ranging of between 75°C and 78°C.

5. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 9, wherein the method is used for a mix which contains granulates of the expanded type.

6-8. (Cancelled).

9. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a sheet of agglomerate material, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) mixing stone materials of predetermined particle size with a binder consisting of organic resins to produce a mix;

(b) distributing the mix inside a tray mould to form a mix layer;

(c) vacuum vibro-compacting the mix layer to obtain a compacted sheet;

(d) using electromagnetic radiofrequency waves having a frequency of less than 300 MHz to dielectrically preheat the compacted sheet to a temperature less than the temperature where catalysis of the binder starts; and

(e) hardening the binder by heating in an oven separate from pre-heating in order to obtain the finished products.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the sheet is heated to a temperature 10°C less than the temperature where catalysis of the binder starts.

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Previously Presented) A method for manufacturing a sheet of agglomerate material in a plant comprising a plurality of stations, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) mixing in a first station stone materials of predetermined particle size with a binder consisting of organic resins to produce a mix;
- (b) distributing in a second station the mix inside a tray mould to form a mix layer;
- (c) vacuum vibro-compacting in a third station the mix layer to obtain a compacted sheet;
- (d) using electromagnetic radiofrequency waves having a frequency of less than 300 MHz in an intermediate station to dielectrically preheat the compacted sheet to a temperature less than the temperature where catalysis of the binder starts; and
- (e) hardening in a final station the binder by heating in an oven separate from pre-heating in order to obtain the finished products.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the plurality of stations are arranged sequentially in the plant so that the steps can be performed sequentially.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein step (c) is performed using means to generate electromagnetic waves having a frequency of between 25 and 35 MHz in the intermediate station.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein steps (c) and (d) are performed for substantially the same time.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein steps (c) and (d) are performed for substantially the same time.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the method is performed as a continuous production operation for producing multiple sheets in series.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the method is performed as a continuous production operation for producing multiple sheets in series.